

EMBARGOED UNTIL Thursday 15 January 2009
e-Learning Foundation stand M40

e-Learning Foundation & Digital Links Team Up To Help Provide Children In Africa With A Digital Future

Recycled computers help to transform lives through technology

15 January 2009 : The e-Learning Foundation, a national charity dedicated to erasing the digital divide in the UK, confirmed at a Steljes sponsored lunch today that it has teamed up with Digital Links to enable schools to reuse redundant computers and help change the lives of children in Africa.

Schools across the UK who are members of the e-Learning Foundation's Affiliated School Scheme will be able to donate their old computer equipment to Digital Links, who will refurbish it for use in local communities in Africa.

Since 2002 Digital Links has distributed over 65,000 refurbished computers to schools and other institutions in Africa, helping to improve education and opportunities for over 1.5 million people.

"There is much synergy between Digital Links and the e-Learning Foundation", commented Lord Parry Mitchell, Chair of the e-Learning Foundation. "We share the same objective to close the digital divide. Currently 98% of children in Africa leave school never having touched a computer. By providing them with refurbished end of life UK school computers we can help provide children in Africa with real opportunities for a better future".

"We are delighted to work with the e-Learning Foundation to link schools in the UK with those in Africa so that they can benefit from desktops that are no longer needed. The refurbished computers and software in African schools will have a profound effect on the future of young people, providing them with the tools needed to take part in our digital age," commented Sir Paul Judge, Chairman of Digital Links.

“As well as helping to close the digital divide, the partnership also brings educational benefits, providing children with valuable insight into the cultures of others,” commented Valerie Thompson, Chief Executive of the e-Learning Foundation. “And there are environmental benefits too. Rather than going into landfill the computers now enjoy another lease of life. “

“Through our relationship with the e-Learning Foundation we are looking to illuminate the growing digital and knowledge divide in Africa which threatens economic stability and progress. Computers may have finished their working lives in UK classrooms, but they can make an enormous difference to a child’s education in Africa, where one recycled computer is used by around twenty-five children per week,” commented Aissatou Sow, Executive Director of Digital Links.

"We are happy to sponsor the launch of the e-Learning Foundation and Digital Links partnership at BETT, which promises to further bridge the digital divide, transforming education and providing young people with the technology skills to move forward in their lives, both in the UK and Africa,” added Martin Large, CEO of Steljes.

Digital Links is also involved in a number of projects in Africa that demonstrate the enormous impacts that technology can have on local communities. In Sierra Leone, for example, computers and wireless technology have been used to improve access to information in schools, hospitals and community centres.

To find out more about the refurbished computers for Africa scheme, please visit the Digital Links booth at BETT- Stand S25.

To find out more about the e-Learning Foundation’s schools’ home access programme, please visit the e-Learning Foundation at BETT 2009 - stand M40.

Editor's notes:

e-Learning Foundation Affiliated School Scheme:

For schools to benefit from the full range of services from the e-Learning Foundation they must be affiliated. Affiliation is conditional on a school demonstrating compliance with the charity's core values – home access, equity of access regardless of means, sustainable funding through parental contributions and sharing knowledge. Affiliation is £100 for Primary Schools and £200 for Secondary Schools. Benefits include the right to apply for grants, help with fundraising, access to a dedicated public relations team, discounts on software packages, use of the Donation Management Service which collects regular parental donations on behalf of the school and free advice and support from a team of dedicated School Liaison Managers.

The Computers for Schools Africa Scheme:

To achieve our goal of improved opportunities through ICT access, Digital Links offers a complete IT disposal service to UK schools, giving new life to their redundant PCs. This enables the reuse of tens of thousands of computers every year, limiting strain on the world's resources and providing vital access to ICT.

Digital Links will collect computers from UK schools, wipe all data, refurbish them and issue an asset report and data wiping certificates. These refurbished computers are then shipped to partners in Africa where they provide schools with much needed equipment and training.

As part of the program Digital Links will provide certificates detailing the number of children benefiting from the donation and amount of waste diverted from landfill. links to the schools forum, with access to ICT lesson plans and activities and a schools2schools tool linking schools in the UK with their peers in Africa.

E-learning Foundation:

The e-Learning Foundation was launched in 2001, to ensure that every schoolchild in the UK should have home access to learning technologies when and where they want to learn.

The Foundation, a registered charity, aims to bridge the digital divide and ensure that all children, irrespective of their background, can have the same access to technology for learning at home as their better off peers.

The Foundation is funded through the public, private and third sector in the form of Government grants, commercial sponsorship, grants and donations.

www.e-learningfoundation.com

Digital Links:

Digital Links was established in 2002 in response to the increasing digital and knowledge divide between developed and developing nations. Through close partnerships with global corporations, Digital Links offers a range of technology solutions for developing countries to build thriving knowledge economies. From computerisation of schools and training teachers on the use of ICT for education to the provision of software and IT tools for small businesses and young entrepreneurs, the work achieved supports areas that are critical to social development and economic prosperity.

Digital Links is a social enterprise which focuses on achieving public good while operating as a self-sustained business entity. Digital Links draws from common and best business practices worldwide to achieve its objectives. We believe in public-private partnerships and work to bring the business world closer to communities by ensuring their corporate social responsibility goals translate into direct benefits for their immediate environment.

Digital Links currently works across 21 countries in Eastern Europe and Africa, with focus on Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, South Africa and Ghana. www.digital-links.org

Steljes:

With over 21 years experience, Steljes has become the leading supplier of interactive technologies in the UK education market. As new technologies emerge, Steljes embraces their potential to advance current pedagogy and ensures that they deliver real impact in the classroom and beyond.

The company's solutions support every level of educational need, from early years to higher education. As the exclusive UK partner for SMART Technologies, the inventor and global market leader of the Interactive Whiteboard, Steljes is deeply involved with Building Schools for the Future, PCP, FE Capital Projects and the full spectrum of school regeneration programmes.

Through its team of educationalists, it works with schools, colleges, government strategists and teachers to provide advice and resource materials to improve learning outcomes.

Exclusive Steljes partners at BETT are SMART Technologies on stand B50, AVerMedia on stand D65 and Turning Technologies on stand H49.

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